

IN THE CLAIMS

**COMPLETE LISTING OF ALL CLAIMS, WITH MARKINGS AND STATUS IDENTIFIERS**

(Currently amended claims showing deletions by ~~strike through~~ or double brackets [[ ]] and additions by underlining)

Listing of Claims:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A contamination ~~Contamination~~ barrier for ~~the prevention~~ of preventing contamination of aqueous solutions in an open ~~[[and/]]~~ or automated system, ~~that comprises~~ said barrier comprising at least one water immiscible hydrocarbon or hydrocarbon mixture.
2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The contamination ~~Contamination~~ barrier ~~as described in of~~ claim 1, characterised in that ~~[[it]]~~ said barrier is comprised of an unsubstituted hydrocarbon.
3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The contamination ~~Contamination~~ barrier ~~as described in of~~ claim 1, characterised in that ~~[[it]]~~ said barrier is comprised of a substituted hydrocarbon.
4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The contamination ~~Contamination~~ barrier ~~as described in of~~ claim 1, one of claims 1 to 3 characterised in that ~~[[it]]~~ said barrier is comprised of a saturated or unsaturated cyclic hydrocarbon.
5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The contamination ~~Contamination~~ barrier ~~as described in~~ one of the claims 1 to 3 claim 1, characterised in that ~~[[it]]~~ said barrier is comprised of a branched ~~[[and/]]~~ or unbranched acyclic hydrocarbon.
6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The contamination ~~Contamination~~ barrier ~~as described in~~ one of the claims 1 to 5 claim 1, characterised in that the hydrocarbon ~~[[has]]~~ is comprised of from 5 to 20, preferably 6 bis 16, most preferably 8 bis 12 carbon atoms.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The contamination~~ Contamination barrier as described in one of the claims 1 to 6 claim 1, characterised in that ~~this as the~~ hydrocarbon is most preferably comprised of a branched or unbranched alkane ~~with preferably 8 to 12 carbon atoms~~.
8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The contamination~~ Contamination barrier as described in of claim 7 characterised in that ~~this as said alkane is~~ preferably selected from the group consisting of octane, nonane, decane and ~~and/or decane as well as dodecane and~~ mixtures thereof.
9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The contamination~~ Contamination barrier as described in one of the claims 1 to 8 claim 1, characterised in that ~~this as the~~ hydrocarbon mixture is comprised of mineral oil.
10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~A method~~ Method for the prevention of preventing contamination ~~characterised in that~~ during the processing of aqueous solutions in open ~~and/or~~ automated systems ~~they are covered~~ comprising covering said aqueous solutions with at least one water immiscible hydrocarbon or hydrocarbon mixture.
11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The method of~~ Method as described in claim 10 characterised in that said hydrocarbon is an unsubstituted hydrocarbon ~~is used for covering~~.
12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The method of~~ Method as described in claim 10 characterised in that said hydrocarbon is a substituted hydrocarbon ~~is used for covering~~.
13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The method~~ Method according to one of the claims 10 to 12 claim 10 characterised in that said hydrocarbon is a saturated or unsaturated cyclic hydrocarbon ~~is used~~.
14. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The method~~ Method according to one of the claims 10 to 12 claim 10 characterised in that said hydrocarbon is a branched or unbranched acyclic hydrocarbon ~~is used~~.

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The method~~ Method according to one of the claims 10 to 14 claim 10 characterised in that ~~[[a]]~~ said hydrocarbon ~~[[with]]~~ is comprised of from 5 to 20, preferably 6 to 16, most preferably 8 to 12 carbon atoms is used.
16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The method~~ Method according to one of the claims 10 to 15 claim 10 characterised in that ~~[[as]]~~ said hydrocarbon most preferably is a branched or unbranched alkane with preferably 8 to 12 carbon atoms is used.
17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The method of~~ Method according to claim 16 characterised in that ~~[[as]]~~ said alkane preferably is selected from the group consisting of octane, nonane, decane and ~~[[or]]~~ dodecane as well as and mixtures thereof are preferably used.
18. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The method~~ Method according to one of the claims 10 to 17 claim 10 characterised in that ~~[[as]]~~ said hydrocarbon mixture ~~[[,]]~~ is comprised of mineral oil is used.
19. (NEW) The contamination barrier of claim 1 characterized in that the hydrocarbon is comprised of from 6 to 16 carbon atoms.
20. (NEW) The contamination barrier of claim 1 characterized in that the hydrocarbon is comprised of from 8 to 12 carbon atoms.
21. (NEW) The contamination barrier of claim 7 characterized in that said branched or unbranched alkane is from 8 to 12 carbon atoms.
22. (NEW) The method of claim 10 characterized in that said hydrocarbon is comprised of from 6 to 16 carbon atoms.
23. (NEW) The method of claim 10 characterized in that said hydrocarbon is comprised of from 8 to 12 carbon atoms.
24. (NEW) The method of claim 16 characterized in that said branched or unbranched alkane is comprised of from 8 to 12 carbon atoms.